

What is claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a node for joining a plurality of structural members together comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing an insert having a node securing portion and a mounting
5 portion that is adapted to have a structural member secured thereto; and
- (b) forming a node about the node securing portion of the insert for joining a plurality of structural members together.

2. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by
10 forming the insert from a first material; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming the node from a second material that is different from the first material.

3. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by
providing the insert with a node securing portion having at least one aperture formed
15 therein; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a portion of the node within the at least one aperture.

4. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by
providing the insert with a node securing portion having at least one protrusion formed
20 thereon; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a portion of the node about the at least one protrusion.

5. The method defined in Claim 1 including the further step (c) of securing
a first structural member to the mounting portion of the insert and securing a second
25 structural member to the node.

6. The method defined in Claim 5 wherein said step (c) is performed by
initially moving the first structural member both in a lateral direction and in a

rotational direction relative to the insert until a desired relative orientation is achieved and then securing the first structural member to the insert.

7. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by providing a plurality of inserts, each of the inserts having a node securing portion and a mounting portion that is adapted to have a structural member secured thereto; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a node about each of the node securing portions of the inserts.

8. The method defined in Claim 7 including the further step (c) of securing a structural member to the mounting portion of each of the inserts.

9. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by securing the mounting portion of the insert to a structural member before performing said step (b).

10. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by securing the mounting portion of the insert to close an open end of a hollow structural member before performing said step (b).

11. A method of manufacturing a vehicular body and frame assembly comprising the steps of:

(a) providing an insert having a node securing portion and a mounting portion;

(b) forming a node about the node securing portion of the insert; and

(c) providing a plurality of structural members;

(d) securing the plurality of structural members to the node to form a vehicular body and frame assembly.

12. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by forming the insert from a first material; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming the node from a second material that is different from the first material.

5 13. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by providing the insert with a node securing portion having at least one aperture formed therein; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a portion of the node within the at least one aperture.

10 14. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by providing the insert with a node securing portion having at least one protrusion formed thereon; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a portion of the node about the at least one protrusion.

15 15. The method defined in Claim 11 including the further step (c) of securing a first structural member to the mounting portion of the insert and securing a second structural member to the node.

20 16. The method defined in Claim 15 wherein said step (c) is performed by initially moving the first structural member both in a lateral direction and in a rotational direction relative to the insert until a desired relative orientation is achieved and then securing the first structural member to the insert.

25 17. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by providing a plurality of inserts, each of the inserts having a node securing portion and a mounting portion that is adapted to have a structural member secured thereto; and wherein said step (b) is performed by forming a node about each of the node securing portions of the inserts.

18. The method defined in Claim 17 including the further step (c) of securing a structural member to the mounting portion of each of the inserts.

19. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by
5 securing the mounting portion of the insert to a structural member before performing said step (b).

20. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by
securing the mounting portion of the insert to close an open end of a hollow structural
10 member before performing said step (b).